

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

February 8, 2021

COUNTIES:
ASOTIN
COLUMBIA
FERRY
GARFIELD
LINCOLN
PEND OREILLE
SPOKANE
STEVENS
WALLA WALLA
WHITMAN

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Jay Inslee:

I write to you today to encourage your administration to take the necessary steps in achieving a COVID-19 vaccine delivery system that ensures every dose is getting to priority populations in a timely manner, particularly in rural areas. Ongoing support at the federal and state levels is critical to Eastern Washington's ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am eager to work with you on a continued coordinated response.

As you know, rural areas are at a disadvantage when it comes to health care access and infrastructure. We have a shared commitment of working to help set these communities up for success. To achieve this goal, I urge your administration to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to vaccine distribution, and to continue to provide certain priority population tiering flexibilities, so that health care providers can expeditiously administer the vaccine and avoid wastage. I would further ask that your administration utilize the local population knowledge of our health care workers, and encourage you to include local public health officials, providers, and other stakeholders in the decision-making process. Please provide clear and concise methodology for your administration's COVID-19 vaccine distribution and allocation plans.

Media reports indicating that vaccines are being reallocated from rural counties to more urban counties are concerning, but I am hopeful that we can work together to ensure that a steady vaccine supply is making its way to all areas of Eastern Washington.

I greatly appreciate the tremendous amount of time and effort being applied to the statewide COVID-19 vaccine distribution system, especially given the unprecedented nature of this public health crisis. Again, my concern is rural areas will be left behind if further flexibilities are not addressed. Collaboration and clear, proactive communication will help health care workers in Eastern Washington serve the public and achieve our mutual goal of getting shots in people's arms as quickly and safely as possible. I look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress